

# ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

August 29, 2002

1. **Beach at George Wyth closed; further investigation being made by DNR to determine bacteria source**
2. **DNR sets time limit on burial of sows killed in fire**
3. **Confinement siting committee to finalize recommendations**

## **BEACH AT GEORGE WYTH PARK CLOSED; FURTHER INVESTIGATION BEING MADE BY DNR TO DETERMINE BACTERIA SOURCE**

WATERLOO — The beach at George Wyth State Park is closed until further notice because of elevated bacteria levels, according to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

A swimming advisory had been posted at the beach for the last three weeks. Investigation by the DNR has determined that high bacteria levels are consistently found at only one small portion of the beach. Additional monitoring has been unable to determine elevated bacteria levels anywhere else on the lake.

Because of the park's unique urban location, livestock is not a likely source of bacteria and the additional sampling around the lake where no problems have been documented makes wildlife a less likely source of the elevated bacteria. Because the possibility of the bacteria being from human sources has not yet been eliminated, the DNR will close the beach until further investigation can be completed. The DNR plans to start excavation work at the beach next week to see if there is any underground sources such as leaking pipes that might be causing bacteria problems.

“We are going to continue to investigate potential sources of bacteria at George Wyth State Park, but for now, we are closing the beach for safety reasons until we can find a source. The potential of the bacteria being primarily from human sources increases the risk of disease if contaminated water is ingested,” said Mary Skopec of the DNR.

Bacteria is a naturally occurring organism in the environment and is found in the digestive systems of all warm-blooded creatures including humans, livestock and

wildlife. Four years of research at state park beaches have indicated that bacteria levels are most often affected by runoff after rain or snow melt and that the levels can rise and fall quickly depending on weather conditions.

“One of the big changes we made in our beach monitoring program this year was to aggressively investigate areas where we have experienced problems to try and determine bacteria sources. In this case, we have been able to isolate the problem to a relatively small area, but not yet been able to determine what is causing it,” said Skopec.

In the case of George Wyth, increased water monitoring where samples were collected from a grid at the beach determined that the bacteria levels were coming from just one small area of the beach. Other areas of the beach around it did not show elevated bacteria levels. The overall bacteria count for state park beaches is based on average of samples taken from several places in the beach area.

“Hopefully, we can quickly determine what the source of bacteria may be and take immediate action to correct the problem,” said Skopec.

**For more information, contact Mary Skopec at (319) 335-1575.**

## **DNR SETS TIME LIMIT ON BURIAL OF SOWS KILLED IN FIRE**

ATLANTIC — The DNR is requiring Natural Pork Production of Harlan to complete the clean-up process and burial of sows killed in a fire 11 days ago by 5 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 2.

“We’ve been working with Gary Weihs of Natural Pork Production and his contractors to get it done, but the process has been slowed to allow the insurance company to investigate the cause of the fire,” said Dan Stipe, supervisor of the DNR Atlantic field office.

“We’ve asked Natural Pork Production to put fences up at night or to work through the night until the clean-up is finished,” said Stipe.

Normally a clean-up like this would be done in a few days, but the insurance adjusters have not yet finished their inspection, Stipe added.

The fire occurred late Aug. 18 or early Aug. 19 in a 12-room farrowing facility in which approximately 864 sows and 6,500 pigs were killed.

**For more information, contact Dan Stipe, DNR supervisor, (712) 243-1934.**

## **CONFINEMENT SITING COMMITTEE TO FINALIZE RECOMMENDATIONS**

DES MOINES — The statewide committee to develop criteria for siting large confinement facilities will meet Sept. 4 and 5 at the DNR office, 7900 Hickman Road, Urbandale.

“Committee members hope to finish on Sept. 4, but scheduled Sept. 5 in case they need it to wrap up their recommendation,” said Robin Puisner, DNR representative to the state committee.

The meeting on Sept. 4 will begin with 30 minutes of public participation at 9 a.m.

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

Sept. 4 – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Welcome & Public Participation
- Tabled Issues
- Action on Minutes of Prior Meeting
- Assign Points to Mitigating Factors
- Assign Percentages to Risk Factors & Determine Threshold for Passing the Matrix
- Example Scoring of Two Cases

Sept. 5 – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- Final Recommendation

Meetings are open to the public and a complete agenda will be available on the DNR website at <http://www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/epd/wastewtr/feedlot/feedlt.htm>. For more information, contact Christine Spackman, recorder and environmental program supervisor, at (515) 281-7276 or at [Christine.Spackman@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:Christine.Spackman@dnr.state.ia.us).

**For more information, contact Karen Grimes, at (515) 281-5135.**